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Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Chair: Mr. Bugajski ..... (Poland)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

General debate on issues related to all aspects of the work of the Preparatory Committee (*continued*)

1. **Ms. Böhlke-Möller** (Namibia), speaking on behalf of the African Group, welcomed the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which complemented and reinforced States' commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the African Group sought the establishment of more comprehensive nuclear disarmament measures.

2. It was essential for all nuclear-weapon States to provide non-nuclear-weapon States with universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory and legally binding assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances. She therefore welcomed and underscored the importance of General Assembly resolution 70/34 (2015) as an integral part of multilateral disarmament efforts.

3. Seven decades after the first-ever use of atomic bombs, the African Group questioned whether the world had learned lessons from its past. States needed to unite to ensure a world free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, as envisaged in the very first resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, resolution 1 (I) of 1946. It was also necessary to speak out against the slow pace of nuclear disarmament and the lack of commitment shown by nuclear-weapon States to dismantling their nuclear weapons and ensuring that such weapons were never produced again.

4. She regretted the failure of States parties to reach consensus on a final document of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, despite delegations' efforts, and called on the nuclear weapon States to demonstrate the political will necessary to ensure the formulation of recommendations on nuclear disarmament at the 2020 Review Conference. As the continued existence of nuclear weapons posed a real threat to humanity, the commitments made by the nuclear-weapon States under the Treaty must be fulfilled.

5. Reaffirming the central role of nuclear-weapon-free zones in consolidating the Non-Proliferation Treaty, strengthening the non-proliferation regime and contributing to nuclear disarmament across all regions of the world, she said that the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba), the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco), the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Rarotonga), the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (Treaty of Bangkok), the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia (Treaty of Semipalatinsk) and the nuclear-weapon-free status of Mongolia made a significant contribution to the overall objective of a world free of nuclear weapons by enhancing global and regional peace and security. In that context, the African Group remained committed to the Treaty of Pelindaba.

6. The Group continued to be concerned by the lack of progress made in implementing the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, which was an integral part of the package of decisions agreed at that Conference and the basis upon which consensus had been reached on the indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. That resolution would remain valid until its objectives had been fulfilled.

7. All States must comply with international law, including international humanitarian law. Any use of nuclear weapons was a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and a crime against humanity. The total elimination of nuclear weapons and the assurance that they would never be produced again was the only unqualified assurance that could be given against the catastrophic humanitarian consequences arising from the use of such weapons. The continued existence and possession of nuclear weapons did not guarantee security, but instead confirmed the risk of their potential use. The world and outer space must be free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. The nuclear-weapon States must stop modernizing, upgrading and extending the lives of their nuclear weapons and related facilities. She also stressed the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, and highlighted the special responsibility of the nuclear-weapon States in that regard. That Treaty had the potential to halt the further development, qualitative improvement and proliferation of nuclear weapons, thereby contributing to the goal of nuclear disarmament.

8. Lastly, she reaffirmed the importance of the work entrusted to the Conference on Disarmament and underscored that multilateral disarmament negotiations would achieve tangible results only with the necessary political will to support that process.

9. Speaking as the representative of Namibia, she said that the mutually reinforcing pillars of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, namely, nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the right to

peaceful use of nuclear energy, were essential for strengthening international peace and security. Highlighting that the discussion of nuclear disarmament should remain a priority at the current session, she called on nuclear-weapon States to fully comply with their legal obligations and unequivocal undertakings to eliminate nuclear weapons without further delay and in a transparent, irreversible and verifiable manner.

10. The failure to reach consensus on a final document at the 2015 Review Conference was a reminder to all States to redouble their efforts and reaffirm their strong commitment to the Treaty in order to achieve a successful 2020 Review Conference.

11. Namibia remained a committed State party to the Treaty of Pelindaba and called for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. It was concerning that, despite the consensus reached at the 2010 Review Conference, such a zone had not yet been established.

12. The Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was essential in curbing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and advancing the goal of nuclear disarmament. It was important to strive for the entry into force of the Treaty, which would further strengthen the verification regime and thereby contribute significantly to international peace and security. She therefore called on the Annex II States to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay. She also welcomed the historic adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which would complement and strengthen the Non-Proliferation Treaty and which was soon to be ratified by Namibia.

13. Nuclear disarmament was of highest priority given the threat to humanity posed by the existence, testing and threat of use of nuclear weapons, and in light of the worrying lack of progress made by the nuclear-weapon States in complying with their relevant obligations and commitments. She called on those States to eliminate their nuclear arsenals in accordance with their obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty in order to overcome the current impasse. Reaffirming her country's support for the joint comprehensive plan of action, she also called on the parties to that agreement to comply fully with their commitments.

14. In view of the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, all States must comply with the relevant provisions of international and humanitarian law and seek to promote international peace and security when implementing measures or initiatives in the area of nuclear disarmament.

15. She underscored the importance of the peaceful applications of nuclear technology for sustainable development and stressed that the technical cooperation and assistance provided by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to meet the needs of its Member States must not be subject to any conditions that were incompatible with the IAEA statute.

16. In conclusion, she highlighted that multilateral disarmament negotiations would achieve tangible results only if States could generate the necessary political will to support that process.

17. **Mr. Najafi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that success in maintaining the credibility and legitimacy of the Non-Proliferation Treaty depended on the attainment of its main objective of safeguarding the security of humanity by eliminating the threat posed by the world's most dangerous weapons. Despite being only two years away from the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty's entry into force, States were no closer to achieving that objective owing to the actions and policies of nuclear-weapon States, particularly the United States of America. The nuclear-weapon States continued to retain thousands of nuclear weapons, emphasizing their value and in some cases increasing their role in national security and military doctrines. Certain States also continued to threaten to use such weapons against both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty. Others had embarked on a new nuclear arms race, modernizing their nuclear missiles and their delivery systems and developing new types of low-yield nuclear weapons for use in regional conflicts. The nuclear-weapon States had not engaged in negotiations on effective measures to achieve nuclear disarmament.

18. The non-nuclear weapon States categorically rejected attempts by certain States parties to attribute those negative trends and the lack of progress in nuclear disarmament to international security conditions, and believed the root causes of the current situation to be disregard for multilateralism; unwillingness to cooperate multilaterally and in good faith in negotiations on a legally binding instrument for the elimination of nuclear weapons; lack of political will to achieve nuclear disarmament; and persistent non-compliance with nuclear disarmament obligations.

19. Unilateralism, particularly the unilateral nuclear actions and policies of the United States, presented the gravest threat to the future of the Treaty and disarmament. That country was attempting in vain to convince States parties that in order to make progress on nuclear disarmament it was necessary to abandon existing commitments and instead create subjective conditions as preconditions for fulfilling disarmament obligations. The real intention of such a distorted

discourse was to make article VI of the Treaty a dead letter. The 2020 Review Conference must focus on the fulfilment of existing commitments relating to nuclear disarmament. Any final document should reaffirm the validity of the commitments made at previous review conferences and indicate the steps to be taken to implement article VI, including a call on all nuclear weapon States to participate as a matter of priority in negotiations on and the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention at the Conference on Disarmament.

20. While the exploitation by a few countries of the potential devastating impact of nuclear technology continued to pose the gravest threat to humanity, the peaceful applications of nuclear technology offered great benefits, which States parties could enjoy by exercising their inalienable right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and by fulfilling their commitments to facilitate the exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information. Although non-nuclear-weapon States had implemented comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols, they remained subject to various restrictive measures and initiatives that limited their ability to exercise their inalienable right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and to participate in peaceful nuclear cooperation. All States parties had agreed at previous review conferences that preferential treatment should be given to the non-nuclear-weapon States parties in relation to all activities designed to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In practice, however, States that were not parties to the Treaty but that possessed nuclear weapons appeared to be receiving such preferential treatment. That issue should be addressed at future Preparatory Committee sessions and review conferences.

21. As a steadfast supporter of nuclear disarmament, the Islamic Republic of Iran was equally committed to non-proliferation and had been at the forefront of efforts to achieve the universality of the Treaty, particularly in the Middle East. The possession of nuclear weapons by the Israeli regime, which had a long and dark history of aggression, occupation and war crimes, posed a serious threat to the security of non-nuclear-weapon States in the Middle East and contributed to the global proliferation of those weapons. With the blind support of the United States, the Israeli regime continued to block all international and regional efforts to implement the 1995 resolution, in contravention of its international commitment to undertake all necessary measures aimed at that resolution's prompt implementation. The resolution had been an integral element of the outcome of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and constituted the basis on which the Treaty had been indefinitely extended without a vote. The States parties must bear in mind that the persistent failure to implement the resolution would have unintended consequences. The nuclear weapon programme of Israel was the result of the application of double standards by certain nuclear-weapon States, particularly the United States, and their failure to comply with and enforce the legally binding non-proliferation norm, which should be applied globally and without exception.

22. Iran remained committed to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts despite the fabricated crisis of a few years ago, which had adversely affected not only his country but also global peace. That crisis had been overcome through painstaking negotiations resulting in the joint comprehensive plan of action, which was a success of multilateral diplomacy. The vital importance of that plan as a model for the resolution of technically and politically complex issues had been widely acknowledged and explained the international community's steadfast support for its implementation.

23. He called on the United States to fulfil its commitments under the plan. While Iran had complied with its own commitments, as confirmed by IAEA in its reports, the United States had continually violated the terms of the agreement, including through actions aimed at coercing other parties to renege on their undertakings. Such actions constituted not only the violation of a multilaterally negotiated deal but also of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). The United States administration had blatantly presented certain parties to the plan with an ultimatum for the one sided alteration of the deal's provisions, to which his country's response was clear and firm: the plan would not be renegotiated or altered. The United States would be held accountable for any consequences of its reckless policies, which sent an unambiguous message that the country was an unreliable and untrustworthy party in any bilateral or multilateral agreement.

24. For the review process to be successful, the status of implementation of all Treaty provisions should be assessed and reviewed in a balanced manner. However, the current stalemate with regard to nuclear disarmament could not be ignored. Greater attention must be paid to the urgent need to implement nuclear disarmament commitments. It was clear that the future of the Treaty depended primarily on the implementation of article VI by nuclear-weapon States. No effort should be spared in ensuring the full and effective implementation of the Treaty as the most effective means of preserving its credibility and longevity.

25. **Mr. Baddoura** (Lebanon) said that his country was committed to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and greatly valued the principles on which it was based. He called on States parties to respect its provisions and abide by all decisions reached at previous review conferences. The Treaty, which was the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime, must be universally implemented given the benefits it offered with regard to international peace and security. The Treaty's credibility and effectiveness depended on the equal treatment and balanced implementation of its pillars. However, in spite of a number of positive initiatives, progress in the field of nuclear disarmament continued to be lacking, despite the fact that article VI obligated nuclear-weapon States to pursue disarmament.

26. Although eight years had passed since the 2010 Review Conference, the recommendations of the Conference relating to nuclear disarmament had not yet been implemented. The existence of nuclear weapons that were ready to be deployed at any time could destroy the world, and there appeared to be little hope that there would be a reduction in their numbers or any serious initiatives to lower their operational status in the near future. Unfortunately, nuclear weapons and justifications for their use played a significant role in the military doctrines of certain States. Huge sums continued to be invested in modernizing existing nuclear arms and their delivery systems and in developing new tactical nuclear weapons.

27. It was regrettable that the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty had not yet entered into force and that the Committee on Disarmament had not yet been able to make progress on negative security assurances or negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (fissile material cut-off treaty). The States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, particularly nuclear-weapon States, must take those elements into consideration and seek to ensure the success of the 2020 Review Conference by adopting a more transparent approach and taking new initiatives to advance nuclear disarmament efforts. The current heightened level of conflict in several regions was being used as an excuse to avoid implementing article VI, a fact that created mistrust and polarization, leading to the exchange of accusations and thus to an increased risk of tensions and the possibility of an arms race or even more dire consequences.

28. He emphasized the importance of the Treaty's non-proliferation pillar, including with respect to the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, an area in which activities could not easily be pursued without non-proliferation mechanisms in place. IAEA remained the only international body responsible for monitoring safeguards and conducting verification activities. The comprehensive safeguards agreement was the sole legal framework for verifying the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, whereas the additional protocol, while important, was only a voluntary mechanism.

29. Diplomacy, based on constructive dialogue, was the most effective means of de-escalating proliferation-related crises, as evidenced by the joint comprehensive plan of action. He called on all States concerned to fulfil their obligations under the plan, which would benefit all States and promote stability in the Middle East. He also called on States to cease politicizing and applying double standards with respect to the issue of non-proliferation, as such conduct only made the situation more complex, as evidenced by the failure of the international community to implement the 1995 resolution. It was essential for States parties to succeed, at the 2020 Review Conference, in adopting a clear mechanism for the implementation of that resolution, as it had been a key factor in securing the indefinite extension of the Treaty. The continued failure to implement it could undermine the Treaty's credibility and negatively affect the entire non-proliferation regime.

30. Despite repeated calls by the international community, the nuclear material and activities of Israel remained outside the scope of the Treaty. That country had not placed its nuclear facilities under Agency safeguards and was unwilling to engage in serious negotiations on the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The continuing ambiguity in respect of its military nuclear programme was cause for serious concern, and the international community's failure to hold Israel accountable for its actions diminished prospects for peace in the Middle East and condemned those living in the region to the continued threat of proliferation and nuclear war.

31. Underscoring the inalienable right of the States parties to benefit from nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, he expressed appreciation for the role of IAEA in placing nuclear energy at the service of peoples and their development. In that regard, the resources of the Agency's Technical Cooperation Fund must be sufficient, guaranteed and predictable. The 2020 Review Conference should support the right of States parties to access the peaceful uses of nuclear energy without discrimination, through the exchange of scientific materials and information and continued multilateral cooperation. In that respect, the Nuclear Suppliers Group should improve guidelines on expert controls and bring them into line with Treaty principles, and should move away from politicization and selectivity.

Furthermore, the Review Conference should adopt recommendations on measures to strengthen the international nuclear security and safety framework.

32. He hoped for a successful outcome to the 2020 Review Conference, which would build confidence and dispel the perception that inequality was inherent in the Treaty. With equal rights and obligations, the States parties would be able to cooperate in building a better world.

33. **Mr. Aala** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the Syrian Arab Republic had been one of the first States to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, recognizing at the time of its accession the grave threat posed by nuclear weapons to international and regional peace and security. His country continued to respect its obligations under the Treaty and to comply with its comprehensive safeguards agreement in full cooperation with IAEA. He rejected attempts by certain States to politicize issues and apply double standards. It was important not to confuse legal obligations with voluntary measures, as highlighted by the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference.

34. Expressing hope that progress towards the objectives of the Non-Proliferation Treaty could be achieved at the current session, he called for the universalization of the Treaty in order to preserve its credibility, especially in the Middle East; the balanced consideration of issues relating to non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament; and confirmation of the inalienable right of States parties to access nuclear technology for peaceful uses, in accordance with article IV of the Treaty.

35. Twenty-three years after the adoption of the 1995 resolution, there was still no sign of progress in its implementation, particularly as some States parties continued to avoid their obligations and hamper any initiatives in that regard. All States of the Middle East except Israel had demonstrated their willingness to take practical steps towards the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, while Israel, with the full support of its allies, namely the United States and the United Kingdom, continued to refuse to accede to the Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State.

36. In view of the failure to convene a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, and the failure of the 2015 Review Conference to adopt a final document, he reiterated that the creation of such a zone was an integral part of States parties' obligations under the Treaty. He therefore called on all States parties to fulfil their obligations. The 1995 resolution would remain valid until its objectives were achieved and its provisions fully implemented. The benchmark for measuring the success of the 2020 Review Conference would be the implementation of that resolution and the full commitment of all States parties to the creation of such a zone in the Middle East.

37. The claims that his country was not cooperating with IAEA were unfounded. The Agency continued to support technical projects on public health and the environment and conducted regular verification activities in the country, despite the challenging conditions. Some States also continued to allege that the Syrian Arab Republic was failing to cooperate fully with regard to the nature of the Dayr al-Zawr military installation that had been attacked by Israel. However, those allegations ran counter to the fact that the Agency's findings had not been the subject of consensus among member States as they had been based on approximations and lacked material evidence. It was also clear to all which State had impeded, for the benefit of its own political agenda, the implementation of the agreement signed with IAEA in October 2011 to settle all pending issues regarding the site. Noting that Israel had recently admitted responsibility for the attack, he called on States to condemn that country's aggression and encourage it to cooperate with the Agency to confirm the source of uranium pollution found at the site.

38. With regard to statements that had been made regarding the use of chemical weapons, he called on the European Union, France, Germany and the United States to cease their politicized campaigns and respect the legal frameworks governing the mandate and discussions of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, and not to confuse the two.

39. States could not preserve the non-proliferation regime by using false accusations as a pretext for launching military attacks, which violated the Charter of the United Nations and diverted attention from fundamental issues, most notably, the need to universally implement the Treaty and create a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. States must call on Israel to accede to the Treaty, place all its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards without conditions or delay and eliminate its nuclear capacities, which were not subject to international monitoring, rather than using the review process as a means of politicizing issues and unobjectively applying double standards.

40. **Mr. Bucheeri** (Bahrain) said that his country would continue to play a positive role in international efforts towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and would actively participate in all relevant multilateral forums. The acquisition, possession, development and stockpiling of nuclear weapons represented a serious threat to international peace and security. The best way of overcoming that threat was the complete elimination of such weapons without preconditions. That was the litmus test for the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

41. It was regrettable that, despite significant efforts and good intentions, the 2015 Review Conference had failed. As nuclear weapon States were avoiding fulfilling their nuclear disarmament-related commitments, all States must assume their collective responsibility and redouble their efforts to accelerate the implementation of practical steps and measures for the elimination of nuclear weapons. They had a moral duty to overcome their differences and focus on the many areas of common ground.

42. Faced with the lack of progress on the action plan contained in the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference, Bahrain had put forward various proposals in order to overcome the stagnation of the review process. Despite receiving the support of all States parties, the excellent initiative presented in the working paper of the Arab Group at the 2015 Review Conference (NPT/CONF.2015/WP.34) had been shelved, thereby preventing the achievement of international consensus and the conclusion of a final document providing for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, responsibility for which was multilateral and unavoidable.

43. Bahrain shared the position that the failure to hold a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction ran counter to the review process and constituted a violation of agreed obligations. He hoped that that such failure to seize historical opportunities would not be repeated at future review conferences. The Treaty's objectives could not be fulfilled unless all States acceded to the Treaty and implemented it in full. Delays and complacency would only undermine the non-proliferation regime. He therefore called on the international community to mobilize its efforts and take a positive step towards the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East, pursuant to the 1995 resolution. States could achieve a historic breakthrough and agree on a consensus-based workplan at the 2020 Review Conference if they fully complied with their obligations and avoided dwelling on past failed attempts.

44. **Mr. Boukili** (Morocco) said that the current session coincided with a period of mistrust of the basic principles of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The danger posed by nuclear weapons was only too clear and the significant global concern over the threat of nuclear war was entirely justified.

45. The nuclear powers continued not only to modernize their nuclear arsenals, but also to develop new generations of nuclear weapons, and to assign them a prominent role in their military and security doctrines in violation of the letter and spirit of the Treaty. Moreover, the paralysis of the Conference on Disarmament remained a source of frustration, given its inability to agree on a balanced and consensus-based work programme for the negotiation of international instruments on nuclear disarmament, fissile material, negative security assurances and the prevention of the militarization of outer space.

46. Nevertheless, there had been positive signs in recent months, including the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons; the decision to convene a high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament in May 2018; the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts to examine the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament; the establishment of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons; the decision by the Conference on Disarmament to establish five subsidiary bodies to conduct substantive discussions and broaden areas of convergence; and the diplomatic momentum triggered by the decision by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to suspend its nuclear tests. It was necessary to capitalize on those achievements and take advantage of that momentum in order to work towards the achievement of the Non-Proliferation Treaty's objectives.

47. The balance between the Treaty's pillars could be maintained only through the balanced and universal application of all the provisions of the Treaty, which remained the cornerstone of the non-proliferation and disarmament regime. For that reason, Morocco had always supported initiatives to strengthen the authority of that regime, promote the universality of the Treaty and promote international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology.

48. The indefinite extension of the Treaty had put an end to the uncertainties surrounding the nuclear non-proliferation regime by giving it permanent status. However, the failure of the previous review conference, the lack of tangible progress on nuclear disarmament and the failure to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone

in the Middle East all highlighted the threat faced by that regime.

49. Despite the challenges, there was no questioning the significance of the Treaty and the need to redouble efforts to maintain its strength and credibility, including through the implementation of concrete measures to ensure compliance with its provisions and the decisions taken over the past four decades by its States parties.

50. The Treaty was based on a careful balance of rights and obligations. The credibility of the non-proliferation regime depended on respect for that balance, the compliance of all States with their commitments and their Treaty obligations and the transparent, balanced and irreversible implementation of the outcomes of the 1995 and 2010 review conferences. Unfortunately, it was clear that the main objectives established at those review conferences had not been achieved, leading to a further loss of confidence among States in the regime's relevance, which had become more acute following the failure of the 2015 Review Conference.

51. Efforts in the area of multilateral nuclear disarmament had been insufficient, as evidenced by the absence of certain key players from the process to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons. Furthermore, the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty had not yet entered into force, despite having been adopted more than 20 years previously.

52. The long-awaited negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty to strengthen the international non-proliferation regime had not yet begun. In addition, no tangible progress had been made on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. In that regard, it was important to recall the decisions of the 2000 and 2010 review conferences, which had clearly affirmed the importance of the accession by Israel to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the placement by that country of all nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards as a necessary step towards the establishment of such a zone. The implementation of the 1995 resolution would prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in that vulnerable region and establish peace and security there. The credibility of the Treaty rested on the ability of States parties, including the depositary States, to take measures to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The action plan of the 2010 Review Conference, which was still relevant, contained the elements necessary to guide States parties through that process in a spirit of mutual respect and inclusivity.

53. Noting that the universality of the Non-Proliferation Treaty had yet to be achieved, he called on the international community to involve those States that were not yet parties in efforts to consolidate global peace and security through nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

54. He reaffirmed his country's commitment to the inalienable right of States parties to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy and technology for peaceful purposes, particularly through international cooperation activities supervised by IAEA. Any attempt to establish preconditions for the exercise of that right was contrary to the letter and spirit of the Treaty and the IAEA statute.

55. It was necessary to increase access to nuclear energy through appropriate international cooperation in the transfer of technology and the sharing of nuclear knowledge for peaceful purposes. Nuclear energy had enabled some countries to overcome their energy dependency and remained a goal for all States aspiring to sustainable development. The IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme played a key role in assisting its member States in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the objectives of the Paris Agreement. It was therefore important to provide IAEA with the necessary support to ensure that all States parties had access to nuclear technology, the development of which had extended to such diverse areas as energy, health, water, agriculture and the environment, especially as the solutions to problems posed by the scarcity of natural resources and climate change could be found in the safe and secure use of nuclear applications.

56. In conclusion, he reaffirmed his country's readiness to work with all States parties to universalize the Non-Proliferation Treaty and ensure full compliance with its provisions in order to uphold the ideal of a nuclear-weapon-free world and to realize the principle of "atoms for peace".

57. **Ms. Martinavičiūtė** (Lithuania) underscored the need for full implementation of article VI and the reduction of both strategic and non-strategic arsenals of deployed and non-deployed nuclear weapons. She expected the nuclear weapon States to exercise leadership in that regard, and the non-nuclear-weapon States to comply with their Treaty obligations and comprehensive safeguards agreements and to strive to reinforce the non-proliferation regime.

58. As a member State of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Lithuania supported the core principle of that Organization's posture that all nuclear-weapon States of the alliance maintained full control and custody of their nuclear weapons. The nuclear arrangements of NATO had already been in place at the time of the Treaty's negotiation and entry into force,

with the primary objective of preventing the further spread of nuclear weapons and preserving peace.

59. It was regrettable that conditions were unfavourable for achieving disarmament without compromising security and international stability. Her country continued to support an operable protocol for achieving nuclear disarmament through a continuous, practical and systematic approach within the existing framework of complementary treaties, institutions and commitments in support of achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons. Owing to the fragility of the current geopolitical environment, it was necessary to remain realistic. It was doubtful that the delegitimization of nuclear weapons would contribute to global security, stability and overall disarmament objectives.

60. Recognizing the value placed by many States parties on access to the benefits of peaceful nuclear energy, she supported their right to develop peaceful nuclear energy within a framework that reduced the risk of proliferation and adhered to international safeguards standards. Nuclear security could not be upheld independently of nuclear safety; both must be addressed in a coordinated and consistent manner. Consistency with IAEA safety standards, an advanced culture of safety, transparency and respect for the legitimate interests of neighbouring countries and international law were of key importance in that regard.

61. **Ms. Castillo Castro** (Colombia) said that, since the entry into force of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the objective of her country's foreign policy had been to promote general and complete disarmament in a transparent and sustained manner. The only assurance against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, particularly considering the devastating effects that their use would have on humanity, was the prohibition of their production and the elimination of existing arsenals.

62. Colombia had striven to promote the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones and the universalization of the Treaty. She hoped that those efforts would contribute to a safer world in which peace was built through full cooperation and confidence-building measures. The best way for States to address international security challenges was by working in a coordinated and constructive manner to establish and strengthen channels of communication and cooperation between governments, law enforcement agencies, civil society and academia in all countries.

63. The current session provided nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States with the opportunity to work together to strengthen and effectively implement the Treaty. It was essential to convene, as a matter of priority, an international conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, which would make a significant contribution to international peace and security, as such zones would eventually lead to general and complete disarmament. As demonstrated by the Treaty of Tlatelolco, nuclear-weapon-free zones promoted regional peace and stability. The creation of such zones in densely populated areas were a triumph of multilateralism. She therefore hoped that a nuclear-weapon-free zone could be established in the Middle East.

64. She called on all States that had not signed and ratified the Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty to do so. All States, particularly the Annex 2 States, should take accession and adherence to that Treaty as an opportunity to demonstrate their political will and commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation. The entry into force and universal implementation of the Test-Ban Treaty would be a concrete outcome of multilateralism that would revitalize efforts to curb the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons.

65. Similarly, active and verifiable compliance with article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty would allow States to effectively observe their international commitments within that framework. During the 2020 Review Conference, it was essential for nuclear weapon States to demonstrate progress in fulfilling their nuclear disarmament commitments made at the 2010 Review Conference. Colombia also hoped to see concrete results in the reduction of existing nuclear arsenals as a step towards their total elimination, a reduction in the role and importance of nuclear weapons in national security doctrines, the exploration of additional means of achieving the elimination of nuclear weapons, a reduction in the risk of accidental detonation of such weapons and the promotion of transparency and mutual trust.

66. Until complete nuclear disarmament was achieved, the nuclear weapon States must provide the non-nuclear-weapon States with assurances that they would not use or threaten to use such weapons against them. For that reason, it was of great importance to make progress in the negotiation of a universal and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances.

67. Efforts to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime were particularly useful in reducing the risks inherent in nuclear weapons, increasing international stability and creating the necessary conditions for preventing nuclear confrontation.

68. Colombia hoped that the 2020 Review Conference would yield results different from those of the 2015 Review Conference. It was essential for the 2020 Review Conference to adopt a consensus document that established commitments and concrete actions in respect of disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. To that end, Colombia was committed to working resolutely towards the achievement in 2020 of a new milestone in the promotion of nuclear disarmament and general compliance with the commitments made upon ratification of the Treaty.

69. Through the promotion of science and technology, the third Treaty pillar had produced tangible results in areas as diverse as energy, industry and health. It exemplified the way in which international regimes could successfully operate to bring benefits to the citizens of the world. Colombia invited countries to continue cooperating in research and development to increase confidence in and enhance the benefits of the use of nuclear materials while guaranteeing the safety of their facilities and ensuring technological progress.

70. **Ms. Flores Liera** (Mexico) said that the current session was taking place in a complex international context characterized by significant security challenges and uncertainties that would have been unthinkable a few decades earlier. In the words of the Secretary-General, the Cold War was back, but with a difference, and the mechanisms and safeguards to manage the risks of escalation that had existed in the past no longer seemed to be present.

71. The renewed interest in the role of nuclear weapons in military doctrines was of particular concern, as was the return to a nuclear arms race, which was in clear contravention of the non-proliferation regime and for which there could be no justification, particularly when the humanitarian consequences of a nuclear attack were clearer than ever. Such an attack would be a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law.

72. The so-called "humanitarian initiative" and the conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons held in Oslo, Nayarit in Mexico and Vienna had led to a better understanding of that humanitarian impact, and constituted a solid basis on which to redouble efforts towards nuclear disarmament as a matter of urgency. As stated by the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki moon, there were no right hands that could handle those wrong weapons. It was for that reason that 122 countries had adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which strengthened and complemented the existing non-proliferation and disarmament regime and contributed to the implementation of article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

73. Disarmament and non-proliferation were mutually reinforcing processes. Compliance with the Treaty was neither subject to any conditions nor optional, and would ensure a safer, more stable world. The States parties must make every possible effort to implement the Treaty's legally binding provisions. She called on all States not yet parties, particularly those with nuclear weapons, to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States. It was incumbent upon all parties to strengthen and ensure the credibility of the Treaty, and to work towards its universality.

74. She hoped that during the current review cycle, States parties could focus their efforts on strengthening compliance with the obligations set out in the Treaty and in the agreements made in the package of decisions of 1995, the 1995 resolution, the thirteen steps and the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference.

75. Mexico had unequivocally condemned the flagrant violation by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of international law and Security Council resolutions. The recent announcement that that country was going to halt its nuclear programme and intercontinental ballistic missile tests was encouraging. She hoped that the announcement would lead to the total denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and peace and stability in the region.

76. At the current session, it was vital to bolster dialogue, trust and compliance with international law. Mexico stood ready to work towards strengthening the Treaty, and invited all parties to join efforts to achieve that objective. The States parties had worked together to build a legal framework by consensus; it was important not to weaken that framework, question it or justify any failure to uphold it.

77. **Mr. Al-Thani** (Qatar) said that his country had acceded to all treaties and conventions on weapons of mass destruction and internationally prohibited weapons. Qatar had also made tireless efforts to establish national legislation to implement its obligations arising from those treaties and conventions, including a law on export controls on nuclear material and on how to handle such material so as to prevent it from falling into the hands of criminal groups.

78. The complex international situation was deteriorating as a result of the fact that many States now believed in the importance of nuclear weapons in military doctrines, thus increasing the possibility of a nuclear crisis. That negative development required multilateral diplomacy and steps to reduce tension and

restore confidence in international action to achieve peace and security, most notably in the areas of nuclear disarmament and arms control.

79. Although 50 years had passed since the conclusion of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and despite the efforts of the United Nations, States were far from achieving tangible progress in implementing the Treaty's pillars owing to the instrument's discriminatory nature. In recent times, nuclear-weapon States had increased their efforts to develop nuclear weapons rather than dismantle them, leading the international community to further highlight the danger posed by those weapons, including through the three conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. Qatar was one of the States that had endorsed the pledge presented by Austria at the 2014 Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons (the Humanitarian Pledge), and cooperated with all relevant stakeholders in order to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons and establish a world free of such weapons.

80. With regard to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, Qatar affirmed the importance of developing peaceful nuclear energy programmes in line with comprehensive safeguards agreements to ensure that countries applied the highest nuclear safety and security standards.

81. He expressed the hope that the 2020 Review Conference would focus on, and lead to, the total elimination of nuclear weapons as the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of such weapons.

82. **Ms. Williams-Maluk** (South Africa) said that her country remained convinced that nuclear weapons undermined security. As long as such weapons existed and vertical and horizontal proliferation persisted, the world would continue to face the threat of annihilation. The retention of nuclear weapons served as a catalyst for further proliferation. Recent developments on the Korean Peninsula clearly illustrated that the threat of the use of nuclear weapons was not only real, but also imminent.

83. South Africa had repeatedly stated that the Non-Proliferation Treaty represented an historic agreement between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States under which the former had undertaken to eliminate their nuclear weapons on the basis of the reciprocal undertaking by the latter not to pursue the nuclear option. The honouring of that agreement was therefore central to the Treaty's integrity, and would enable the Treaty to remain the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and of the peaceful uses of nuclear technology.

84. The 2010 Review Conference had reaffirmed the continued validity of the outcomes of the 1995 and 2000 review conferences, particularly the unequivocal commitment by the nuclear-weapon States to eliminate their nuclear arsenals and abide by the principles of transparency, irreversibility and verifiability in fulfilment of Treaty obligations. Those commitments, including the commitments set out in the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference, would remain valid until fulfilled. Nevertheless, the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference had failed to dispel the serious concerns of most States parties with regard to the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament. For that reason, the success of the 2020 Review Conference would be determined by the extent to which the nuclear-weapon States honoured their commitments.

85. The limited progress made on nuclear disarmament since 2010 was regrettable. While a reduction in nuclear arsenals was important, it was no substitute for concrete, transparent, irreversible and verifiable nuclear disarmament measures. Ongoing modernization programmes, including in relation to delivery systems, clearly showed that some States wished to retain their weapons indefinitely, in breach of their legal obligations and political commitments, thus undermining the Treaty and its non-proliferation provisions. She therefore welcomed the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which represented one of the most important developments in the area of nuclear weapons since 1945. It filled a key legal gap in international law on weapons of mass destruction by explicitly prohibiting nuclear weapons, and would complement and strengthen the Non-Proliferation Treaty, particularly its article VI.

86. The strengthened safeguards system remained an essential element of collective efforts to address the threat posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Those strengthened safeguards would contribute to establishing confidence in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, which, in turn, would greatly facilitate the transfer of nuclear technology and the use of nuclear energy for the benefit of developing countries. South Africa therefore maintained its principled position that States parties must conclude comprehensive safeguards agreements as required under the Treaty, while viewing the additional protocol as an indispensable instrument that enabled the Agency to provide credible assurances regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities from a State.

87. She welcomed the progress made in implementing the joint comprehensive plan of action and called on all parties involved to continue fulfilling their obligations under the agreement. She also supported the

establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, including in the Middle East. Such zones enhanced global and regional peace and security, strengthened the non-proliferation regime and contributed to nuclear disarmament objectives. The 1995 resolution was an integral part of the package of decisions that had enabled the indefinite extension of the Treaty. Although the 2010 Review Conference had agreed on specific actions to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, there had been no tangible results. South Africa therefore urged all States to redouble their efforts to convene a conference on that important issue, with the participation of all States of the region, without further delay.

88. Tensions between key members of the Security Council were of particular concern. The situation was reminiscent of the Cold War era, but the current danger, as expressed by the Secretary-General, was that States did not have the dialogue and communication mechanisms that had existed during that period.

89. South Africa condemned the nuclear tests carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Current tensions on the Korean Peninsula clearly illustrated that neither the pursuit nor the possession of nuclear weapons could bring about increased security. In an increasingly interconnected world, global threats frequently transcended national borders. That phenomenon required enhanced international cooperation and strong international institutions that could respond to collective security concerns. She welcomed current plans for an inter-Korean summit and a summit between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States as a positive step towards a return to negotiations. It was only through negotiation that a sustainable solution could be found that would bring peace and security to the region. She also welcomed the statement by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that it would not conduct any further tests.

90. Article IV of the Treaty was of particular relevance to Africa given the need for adequate energy supplies to fuel sustainable and accelerated economic growth on the continent. Her country's approach to nuclear energy was based on the fact that peaceful nuclear cooperation and access to the benefits of nuclear energy were integral components of the Treaty. Many countries were increasingly recognizing nuclear energy as a viable, reliable and clean option to meet their growing energy demands, particularly in view of the challenges of climate change.

91. In conclusion, she reiterated her country's support for the full and universal implementation of the Treaty as a means of achieving the common goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. The strength, credibility and vitality of the Treaty rested on a fundamental commitment to its pillars, which must be recognized and upheld.

92. **Mr. Valero Briceño** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that his country endorsed the Final Document of the eighteenth Mid-Term Ministerial Meeting of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, in which the Movement repeated its condemnation of and opposition to the adoption by certain States of the doctrine of pre-emptive attacks, including nuclear weapon attacks, which constituted acts of aggression and blatant violations of the Charter of the United Nations. Moreover, he highlighted the reference in that Document to the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in accordance with the commitments undertaken during the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and subsequent meetings.

93. His country's Constitution promoted nuclear disarmament and cooperation among States, and declared the country's territory to be a zone of peace, which was evidence of its deep-seated pacifism. He highlighted the international community's political commitment to prohibiting and completely eliminating nuclear weapons in the light of the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which made an effective contribution to international peace and security. Through its "peace-based diplomacy", Venezuela supported the principles of international law as a means of maintaining international peace and security. It upheld the principle of general, complete and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament, as demonstrated by the fact that it had been the seventh country to ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

94. He expressed support for the designation by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States of Latin America and the Caribbean as a peace zone, which was a significant contribution by the region to nuclear disarmament and international peace and security. The region was the first to have been declared free of nuclear weapons, under the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

95. The world was facing new threats and challenges, including the stagnation of multilateral diplomacy in the area of disarmament, the accelerated development and modernization of nuclear weapons and the possibility of acquisition of such weapons by terrorist groups. The disastrous consequences for humankind of the misuse,

unauthorized use or intentional use of nuclear weapons were no longer hypothetical. Such use would have irreversible, catastrophic and far-reaching consequences areas and threaten very survival of humanity. The nuclear-weapon States were responsible for adopting measures to reduce and eliminate their nuclear arsenals in accordance with the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

96. His country recognized the importance of that Treaty as the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The progress made at review conferences must be maintained. However, although 50 years had passed since the signing of the Treaty, States were far from achieving its objectives because of a lack of political will on the part of nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their obligations. On the contrary, some States continued to justify the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons on the basis of unacceptable notions regarding international security, which were based on the promotion of nuclear deterrence policies. The development of nuclear and missile technologies was one of the greatest challenges to the non-proliferation regime. For that reason, he called on all States parties to step up efforts to prevent the development of nuclear weapons for the purposes of warmongering.

97. Reiterating the importance of the balanced implementation of the Treaty's pillars to promote the interests of all humankind, he called on the international community to face the challenges posed by the possession of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems by terrorist groups and non-State actors without delay or double standards.

98. Nuclear energy must be used for the good of humankind. Accordingly, he called for the general and complete eradication of nuclear weapons as the only assurance against the danger they posed to the survival of the planet. He appealed to all States that were not parties to the Treaty to commit to using nuclear energy and technology for peaceful purposes only. In that regard, his country supported the efforts made by IAEA to promote assistance and international cooperation.

99. It was possible to guarantee international peace and security only if genuine efforts were made to achieve nuclear disarmament. Regional and global measures were thus needed in order to promote confidence. He reaffirmed his country's commitment to the implementation of the Treaty as a means of strengthening the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Positive steps were needed in order to reach agreement on substantive elements relating to the Treaty's implementation.

100. **Mr. Foo** (Singapore) said that the legitimacy and relevance of the Non-Proliferation Treaty had been severely challenged in recent years, particularly by the failure of the States parties to adopt a final document at the 2015 Review Conference, the slow pace of nuclear disarmament by nuclear-weapon States — and indeed in some cases the modernization of existing nuclear arsenals — and the stalled progress in the convening of a conference to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. It was therefore no surprise that mistrust between nuclear weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States had deepened since the 2015 Review Conference. Furthermore, the exercise of the right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy remained challenging, in particular for developing countries. The Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty had not yet entered into force, and the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons had raised questions about the impact of that new treaty on the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Moreover, the current session was taking place at a time when the current global geopolitical and security situation had become more complex and challenging.

101. He urged nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their disarmament commitments under article VI of the Treaty and the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference and to continue engaging in meaningful dialogue to build trust, thus creating the conditions conducive to future nuclear disarmament negotiations.

102. The entry into force of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was long overdue. He called on all States that had not yet signed and ratified that Treaty, particularly the Annex 2 States, to do so. Pending the Treaty's entry into force, all States should refrain from any action that contravened the object and purpose of the Treaty, including the conduct of nuclear explosions. He also hoped to see progress in negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty by the Conference on Disarmament and through the discussions of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group. He remained concerned by threats to the nuclear non-proliferation regime, including those posed by non-State actors, which could undermine international peace and security.

103. Noting that the IAEA safeguards verification regime played a critical role in the implementation of non-proliferation obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, he called on all States parties that had not yet concluded comprehensive safeguards agreements and additional protocols to do so.

104. He welcomed the resumption of inter-Korean talks and the high-level talks between the Democratic

People's Republic of Korea, the United States and China, and hoped that those developments would create favourable conditions leading to peace and stability and the eventual denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. He also urged the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fully comply with its obligations under all relevant Security Council resolutions and to return to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Singapore took seriously its obligations under the Security Council resolutions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and would continue to fulfil them diligently. It had also continued to step up its counter-proliferation efforts.

105. Recalling that the joint comprehensive plan of action had been implemented for more than two years and that IAEA had verified the implementation by the Islamic Republic of Iran of its nuclear-related commitments, he welcomed that country's continued provisional application of the additional protocol to its safeguards agreement, pending its entry into force. The unravelling of the plan would undermine the nuclear non-proliferation regime and multilateralism at a broader level. He therefore urged all relevant parties to remain committed to the plan and to continue honouring their related undertakings. He also called on the Islamic Republic of Iran to continue its full cooperation with IAEA on all issues related to its safeguards commitments, thus reassuring the international community of the peaceful nature of its nuclear programme.

106. Singapore supported the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones as part of regional efforts to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world, and was pleased to note that 2018 marked the twenty-first anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty of Bangkok. He expressed regret that the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction had not been convened, and called on all parties to work together to break the stalemate.

107. Singapore supported the right of all States parties to the peaceful use of nuclear energy and technology. It also strongly supported and had contributed to the IAEA "Atoms for Peace and Development" mandate and its Technical Cooperation Programme to help developing countries to achieve their developmental targets, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals. The responsible development of peaceful applications of nuclear technology must, however, be carried out safely and securely. Singapore therefore supported the Agency's programmes and activities to strengthen the international nuclear safety and security regime.

108. Despite the challenges, the Non-Proliferation Treaty remained the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime. Since States would ultimately bear the consequences if the Treaty lost its relevance and credibility, they should spare no effort in preserving and strengthening it and work towards its universalization. The Preparatory Committee sessions leading to the 2020 Review Conference provided States with the opportunity to renew their commitment to such efforts. He hoped that all States parties could engage with each other constructively and in a spirit of cooperation at the current session, thus enhancing the prospects for a successful and substantive outcome to the 2020 Review Conference, which would be a fitting way to mark the Treaty's fiftieth anniversary.

109. **Ms. Masana García** (Peru) said that Peru had maintained a long tradition of commitment to all multilateral efforts to achieve peace, disarmament and the strengthening of international security. It supported all initiatives aimed at general and complete disarmament, giving priority to the prohibition and total elimination of weapons of mass destruction. It was in that context that Peru had been one of the first States to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, in recognition of the unsustainability of the status quo and with the conviction that it was a moral imperative to address the international community's call for a world free of weapons of mass destruction, especially considering that the Treaty complemented and strengthened the disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

110. Recognizing that the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was an essential instrument within the international non-proliferation regime, she called for universal adherence to its provisions and its early entry into force, to which end it was crucial that all Annex 2 States subscribed to or ratified that Treaty without further delay. She also urged those States that were not yet parties to the Treaty to refrain from conducting nuclear tests, developing or using new nuclear weapon technologies and carrying out any act that violated the Treaty's purpose and objectives.

111. Peru was deeply concerned by the reaffirmation of the role of and importance assigned by some States to nuclear weapons in their national defence and security doctrines, which was incompatible with the objectives of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and contradicted the commitments made under the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference. The recent escalation in tensions could lead to a new arms race that threatened humanity, which in turn would divert efforts aimed at fulfilling the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. She urged all States parties to be aware

of the catastrophic consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, which transcended national borders and violated human rights and international humanitarian law, having serious repercussions for human survival, the environment, socioeconomic development, the world economy, food security and the health of current and future generations.

112. Peru recognized the value of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and its contribution to peace and international security, and was proud to be a part of the first densely populated zone free of nuclear weapons. She regretted that it had not been possible to hold a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. Given that the establishment of such a zone would represent an important step towards peace in the region, she called for that conference be held as soon as possible.

113. The implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty must be addressed in a joint and balanced manner. Furthermore, it was essential to strengthen the IAEA safeguards system. She hoped that all States would sign an addition protocol, an instrument that must be continually updated and reinforced.

114. Peru was greatly interested in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, particularly the principle of international cooperation in the development of nuclear energy, as it had benefited from such cooperation in various other fields. Technical cooperation should therefore be increased so that States could take maximum advantage of the potential of nuclear energy for civilian purposes.

115. **Mr. Al Rahbi** (Oman) said that his country's accession to the Non-Proliferation Treaty clearly demonstrated its commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. It would continue to participate in all international forums dedicated to nuclear disarmament until the ultimate goal of the total eradication of nuclear weapons had been attained, in order to achieve international peace and prevent human catastrophe. The best way to prevent the threat of nuclear weapons was to completely eliminate them. The credibility of the Treaty was based on its pillars, which should be implemented in a balanced manner. For that reason, the nuclear-weapon States must fulfil their international commitments and work towards eliminating their nuclear arsenals, while making the universality of the Treaty a key priority.

116. Oman supported the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. While it shared the concerns of nuclear-weapon States regarding the possibility of a nuclear arms race, it was confident that the Treaty complemented, rather than undermined, the Non-Proliferation Treaty. In that context, it supported the results of the three conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, which had highlighted the gravity of the threat posed by those weapons.

117. Noting that the main reason for the failure of the 2015 Review Conference was the lack of political will of some States parties, he called on all States not to backtrack on their obligations but to fulfil their commitments and redouble their efforts to eliminate nuclear arsenals. His country gave particular priority to the issue of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons, in accordance with the 1995 resolution, which would remain valid until it was fully implemented, and he called on the countries that had sponsored that resolution to continue their support and implement all other relevant resolutions.

118. The objectives of the Non-Proliferation Treaty could not be met until universality had been achieved through the adherence of both nuclear weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States to the Treaty. Any delay or procrastination was a serious obstacle to the non-proliferation regime. He therefore called on the international community, particularly one of the depositary States, to exert pressure on Israel to accede to the Treaty and place its facilities under comprehensive safeguards.

119. In conclusion, he reaffirmed that all States should have the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The exercise of that right was essential for States' sustainable development, which could be facilitated though IAEA technical assistance programmes.

120. **Mr. Azeez** (Sri Lanka) said that the current session would build on the diverse topics of discussion that had emerged from the Preparatory Commission's previous session, and would help advance the Non-Proliferation Treaty agenda. It was imperative that efforts were focused on ensuring that the 2020 Review Conference would lead to a consensus outcome that prompted action on the commitments made at the 1995 Review Conference. Securing a world free of nuclear weapons should remain the highest priority.

121. The general and comprehensive elimination of all nuclear weapons remained the ultimate goal, the achievement of which required progressive steps. In reality, however, there was a pronounced lack of political will to advance in that area. Instead, there had been an increasing tendency to seek refuge behind terminology such as "incremental approach", "step-by-step approach" and "progressive realization". A stage had been reached in the peace and security discourse

where such terminology no longer had any practical value or meaning. Any serious, concerted efforts towards the adoption of a comprehensive package at the 2020 Review Conference must be bolstered by the reaffirmation of a clear commitment by all parties to the Treaty's obligations and principles.

122. He reiterated the importance of the Treaty as constituting a global non-proliferation and disarmament regime that ensured a balanced and non-discriminatory approach to building international peace and security while safeguarding countries' prospects for economic development through equal access to technology for the advancement of peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Sri Lanka supported all efforts towards achieving the universalization of the Treaty as the legal regime that enjoyed the participation of the largest number of United Nations Member States, including the five permanent members of the Council. It also supported the call for the full range of IAEA safeguards to be applied in order to ensure meaningful implementation of the Treaty's provisions.

123. The lack of progress in the effective implementation of article VI of the Treaty was a worrying trend. Movement away from a realistic path to disarmament could increase the risk, in the medium to long term, of a new arms race with far-reaching humanitarian consequences. It was important to recall that the commitments set out in the package of decisions adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference had been secured as a result of an agreement by States parties to extend the Treaty regime without prejudice to their disarmament obligations. As the international community continued to address the dichotomy between the lack of progress in disarmament and increasing efforts to achieve non-proliferation, all States parties that were able to do so should demonstrate their clear commitment to disarmament by increasing their support for and investment in disarmament training and education provided by the United Nations and other organizations. Such programmes would help developing countries in particular to harness the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, while contributing to international peace and security measures. That would also enable networking and coordination among States and the strengthening of understanding and cooperation in other important areas such as nuclear security.

124. The right of all non-nuclear-weapon States parties to receive effective, universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory, irrevocable and legally binding security assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons could not be emphasized enough. Recalling the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion of July 1996 on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons, he said that, given the scale of death and destruction that could arise from the use of nuclear weapons, it was the collective call of humanity, as reflected in the Advisory Opinion, for States to support deliberations and initiatives on developing mechanisms to prevent such catastrophes in the future.

125. The role of IAEA in the advancement of nuclear technology for sustainable development and activities related to peaceful uses in countries that were States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty — as the main channel for such cooperation — was highly appreciated. The application of the Agency's selection criteria and guidelines for transferring technology and know-how through bilateral cooperation projects must continue in a transparent and objective manner. A nuclear security infrastructure linking the nuclear safety regime and peaceful uses framework at the national level was pivotal to an environment that left no room for vulnerabilities to be exploited by persons or groups with malicious intent. Civil society and the media also had a vital role to play in preventing threats to nuclear security and any malicious use.

126. He encouraged States parties at the current session to develop guidelines that would facilitate the achievement of a timely and pragmatic action plan and final document at the 2020 Review Conference. Building a better and secure future was a shared goal that States could not ignore without disastrous consequences.

127. **Mr. Yoseph** (Ethiopia) said that humanity continued to be threatened by the existence of nuclear weapons. That threat, coupled with the fact that multilateral negotiations had so far failed to lead to consensus between States parties, had made the task of pursuing a world free of nuclear weapons all the more difficult. The failure of the 2015 Review Conference to reach consensus on a final document and the years of delay in agreeing on a work plan for substantive discussions by the Conference on Disarmament were testimony to the need for strong political will, firm resolve and commitment in order to achieve the definitive elimination of nuclear weapons, thereby ensuring sustainable global peace and security. The current session was therefore another opportunity that the international community must seize to move the process forward.

128. As a party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, Ethiopia unconditionally supported the Treaty's core principles, and had endorsed all General Assembly resolutions on nuclear disarmament. Ethiopia had also translated its commitment into action by engaging in the inception, development and realization of the Treaty of

Pelindaba, which had established an African nuclear-weapon-free zone under the auspices of the African Union. Together with 121 other countries, Ethiopia had also voted in favour of the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. It would continue its engagement and support all efforts leading to a world free of nuclear weapons.

129. In view of the fact that the immense and uncontrollable destructive capability and indiscriminate nature of nuclear weapons entailed unacceptable humanitarian consequences, such weapons must never be used again. The only way that that could be guaranteed was through their total elimination. All nuclear-weapon States should provide non-nuclear-weapon States with universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory and legally binding assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Ethiopia supported the establishment and maintenance of nuclear-weapon-free zones, including in the Middle East.

130. Developing countries should advance their use of nuclear energy to support their socioeconomic development under IAEA safeguards. In order to assist developing countries in achieving their development objectives, it was important to strengthen mechanisms for providing support in the area of human resource development and to provide the technology needed to generate nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

131. In conclusion, he called on all States parties to work towards achieving a productive outcome to the 2020 Review Conference on the basis of trust and mutual understanding, in order to create a world free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

132. **Mr. Pung** (Estonia) said that the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which was the cornerstone of global efforts to pursue nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, played a crucial role in international security, paving the way for achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons in which the security interests of all countries were addressed.

133. Estonia was committed to working to achieve tangible progress under the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference in accordance with a progressive approach to be pursued in a pragmatic and responsible way. To that end, it supported the 2016 General Assembly resolutions on a fissile material cut-off treaty and nuclear disarmament verification. His country was proud to participate in the work of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group, and hoped that the process would bring States one step closer to official negotiations on that treaty. It also welcomed the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament. The only way to eliminate nuclear weapons was through effective, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament.

134. The Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was of crucial importance to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and Estonia acknowledged the progress made in strengthening the verification regime. The universalization and entry into force of that Treaty were key priorities. His country therefore urged States, particularly those whose accession was required for the Treaty to enter into force, to sign and ratify it without further delay.

135. The nuclear and ballistic missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remained a threat to global peace and security. The international community must stand united and maintain pressure on that country until it suspended its unlawful programmes and returned to compliance in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. Ethiopia welcomed the latest encouraging developments in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and urged that country to sign and ratify the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty without delay. Meanwhile, the continued non-compliance by the Syrian Arab Republic with its safeguards agreement was regrettable. Ethiopia urged that country to resolve all outstanding issues in full cooperation with IAEA. It also condemned in the strongest possible terms the repeated use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. The international community must end impunity for such war crimes. Estonia remained committed to supporting the joint comprehensive plan of action and to its full implementation, as verified by IAEA. The plan was a multilateral, successful endeavour, concluded in full conformity with the principles of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

136. Recalling that the Treaty's three pillars stood for peace, security and trust, he said that the strategic decision taken 20 years previously by the Government of Ukraine to join the Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State was undoubtedly the right one. It was regrettable that the Russian Federation had clearly violated the Memorandum on Security Assurances in Connection with Ukraine's Accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (Budapest Memorandum) through its illegal annexation of Crimea. Estonia called on the Russian Federation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of Ukraine under that Memorandum.

137. Full compliance with the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty) was crucial. He therefore urged the Russian Federation to address concerns regarding its compliance in a substantial and transparent way and to remain actively engaged in dialogue with the United States. It also encouraged both countries to extend the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms and to pursue discussions on confidence-building measures and the further reduction of their arsenals.

138. At the Preparatory Committee's next session, States parties should reflect on practical progress on many aspects of the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference, including the development of nuclear disarmament verification capabilities, increased transparency measures, the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty and the prompt entry into force of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Focusing on common goals and engaging constructively would help States parties to strengthen the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime.

139. **Mr. Karklins** (Latvia) said that the Non-Proliferation Treaty remained the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime and a major achievement in international security. States should therefore be responsible for upholding and preserving the Treaty as a key multilateral instrument, promoting its universalization and strengthening its implementation. Latvia was strongly committed to the Treaty's full implementation and welcomed the progress made under its three mutually reinforcing pillars. States must preserve that progress and move forward with all the obligations and commitments made under the Treaty.

140. The global community was faced with numerous emerging security challenges that should be addressed multilaterally. At the current juncture, a unified approach to proliferation and the associated security threats, involving both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States, was more necessary than ever.

141. Latvia strongly supported efforts to achieve a peaceful and diplomatic solution to the nuclear programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and welcomed that country's decision to suspend its nuclear and ballistic missile tests. It was important to pursue efforts to identify a lasting solution to achieve regional and global peace and stability. That would require full compliance by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with the Treaty and other international obligations, including its complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization.

142. In recent years, international efforts in the area of non-proliferation had produced tangible results, including the joint comprehensive plan of action. It was crucial that all parties should maintain a constructive and balanced approach to the plan's full implementation.

143. The "building blocks" outlined in the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference were more relevant than ever, and States should continue to pursue their full, step-by-step implementation. States parties must revisit and act on their disarmament and non-proliferation commitments, and ensure that their support for the proposed fissile material cut-off treaty translated into action, having broadly reaffirmed that support at the 2010 Review Conference. The immediate commencement of negotiations on the treaty in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament was of the utmost importance. In that regard, Latvia supported the work of the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group.

144. The Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was of crucial importance to Latvia, and its entry into force and universalization remained a key priority. That Treaty was an indispensable tool in States' efforts to advance global disarmament and non-proliferation. He called on all States that had not yet signed and ratified the Treaty, particularly the Annex 2 States, to do so.

145. A comprehensive verification regime that would eventually lead to a world without nuclear weapons had yet to be designed. The International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification was one of the few examples of a substantial contribution to that end.

146. He stressed the importance of IAEA in ensuring the implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty's third pillar. The Agency's safeguards system also played an essential role in the implementation of the non-proliferation obligations established by the Treaty. The assistance provided by IAEA to its member States in ensuring the highest levels of safety and security for the benefit of all States should be underlined.

147. It was crucial that disarmament and non-proliferation commitments under existing treaties were honoured. In that regard, preservation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty was vital for international peace, security and stability. The Russian Federation should address concerns regarding its compliance in a substantial and transparent way and

actively engage in a constructive dialogue with the United States. In addition, Latvia remained deeply concerned by continued violations of the core provisions of the Budapest Memorandum. Such actions significantly eroded trust and undermined nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

148. In conclusion, he reaffirmed his country's full support for and commitment to all instruments and initiatives leading to a safer world and undiminished security for all, and its commitment to contributing to a rules-based international order, including through its chairmanship of the Nuclear Suppliers Group for the period 2018–2019.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

149. **Mr. Najafi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that he categorically rejected the baseless accusation by the representative of France concerning his country's missile programme, an issue that was related neither to the Non-Proliferation Treaty nor to the mandate of the current session. He called on France to explain why it had failed to implement its obligations under article VI of the Treaty and the disarmament commitments it had made at the 2000 and 2010 review conferences. His country had not forgotten the support provided by France to Saddam Hussein's army when that army had attacked Iranian and Iraqi civilians with chemical weapons.

150. **Mr. Yermakov** (Russian Federation) said that the Russian Federation rejected the completely unsubstantiated accusation that it had failed to comply with the Budapest Memorandum. In the Memorandum, the depositary States had provided Ukraine with security assurances. However, there was no mention in that document of what would happen if the United States and countries of the European Union staged a coup d'état in Ukraine, without the dissolution of the State as a whole. After ousting the legitimate President of Ukraine and guaranteeing a smooth transition of power, to which the President had agreed, those very same countries had staged a coup d'état in the country. The Russian Federation had never violated the territorial integrity of Ukraine, which was and had always been a good neighbour and part of the Russian-speaking world. No State could be more concerned about the current situation in Ukraine than the Russian Federation.

151. With regard to Crimea, the peninsula's inhabitants had conclusively decided their fate, 95 per cent of the population having voted to leave a fascist Ukraine which prohibited them from speaking their native language, banned their political party and stamped out dissidents, and to return to the Russian Federation. That question had been definitively resolved and should not be brought up at the current session, as there were more pressing tasks to attend to.

152. He expressed his frustration that the issue of the Salisbury incident had been raised at the current session, despite his appeals for issues unrelated to the Non-Proliferation Treaty to be kept out of the discussions. The Russian Federation had no knowledge of the precise events surrounding the incident as it had had no access to the two Russian citizens involved and the United Kingdom had been concealing all related information. Against that backdrop, his country was being faced with the absurd allegation that it had used chemical weapons.

153. The United Kingdom, rather than reaching out to the Russian Federation through the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, had simply requested inspectors from the Organisation to be deployed to the country, those inspectors having then confirmed the country's suspicions without even conducting an investigation or presenting any data.

154. The absurd version of events that his country had used chemical weapons in Salisbury would never stand up to scrutiny. He called on the States present not to be influenced by such ridiculous allegations and to focus on the work of the Preparatory Committee.

155. **Mr. Wood** (United States of America), responding to the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, said that that country was in no position to accuse others of failing to comply with the Non-Proliferation Treaty, having been found non-compliant by the IAEA Board of Governors with its comprehensive safeguards agreement, which in turn constituted a violation of article III of the Treaty. Moreover, that country's covert nuclear weapons programme violated article II of the Treaty. Furthermore, the destabilizing activities of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Middle East region were one of the reasons for which it was necessary to discuss conditions for further progress. The country also supported Hamas, Hizbollah, and the Houthi rebels in Yemen, and conducted ballistic missile activities in breach of United Nations resolutions.

156. With respect to the failure to establish a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction, the key problem was the refusal by some States in the region, primarily the Islamic Republic of Iran, to engage in direct talks with Israel. As his country had stated on numerous occasions, it was only through direct and inclusive dialogue that such a zone could be established. However, Iranian support for the Syrian Arab Republic and its use of chemical weapons further called into

[illegible] establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

157. The United States would never hesitate to condemn the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic or any other country, even in the context of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The repeated undermining of that fundamental international norm was a major threat to the international security environment, which States were working to improve.

158. In respect of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, it was the Russian Federation rather than the United States that was violating the Treaty. Years after denying that it possessed a ground-launch cruise missile, in December 2017 the Russian Federation had finally acknowledged that it did indeed possess such a missile. However, it now claimed that the missile was unable to fly in the range prohibited by the Treaty. The United States had for years called for the Russian Federation to return to compliance with its Treaty obligations, and it once again renewed that call.

159. The Russian Federation was continuing its efforts to redraw the boundaries within Europe. It was clear that the Russian narrative on Ukraine did not withstand scrutiny. He called on the Russian Federation to save the Preparatory Committee 's valuable time by sparing it from its revisionist views of historical events.

160. **Mr. Rowland** (United Kingdom) said that his delegation had been clear about its reasons for raising the issues of Salisbury and chemical weapons at the previous meeting. The continued use of chemical weapons undermined the non-proliferation regime, of which the Non-Proliferation Treaty was the cornerstone, and also undermined trust, including through the continued denial by the Syrian regime and others of the use of chemical weapons, as well as diminishing prospects for progress on such issues as a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

161. With regard to the chemical attack in Salisbury, while it was impossible to know the real reason for such a reckless attack that had endangered innocent lives, it was difficult not to conclude that it had been a deliberate attempt to humiliate the United Kingdom and provoke it into rash action. However, there would be no rash action, but a carefully considered reaction to the attempt by the Russian Federation to undermine the international rules-based system, of which the expulsion of Russian diplomats from his country was just the first step. Furthermore, the United Kingdom had not been humiliated. In times of adversity, his country's values came to the fore. The United Kingdom was united and resolute on the issue, and, as had become increasingly evident in recent weeks, stood united among many States that had suffered the hostile actions of the Russian Federation, States that felt the threat posed by that country more keenly every day, and States that deplored the undermining by the Russian Federation of the collective security system on which they all depended. The United Kingdom was therefore humbled that its actions had catalysed such a strong shared response from many States, who, by expulsing Russian officials from their territory, had sent a clear signal to the Russian Federation that they would not tolerate its actions in flagrant violation of international law, nor its attempts to undermine common values. The Russian Federation must pay heed to that response.

162. **Mr. Al Ashkar** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the statements by the representatives of the United States and the United Kingdom were a continuation of the systematic campaign carried out by those countries to demonize his own within the United Nations since 2011. The completely baseless allegations were a mere pretext for launching military campaigns against a sovereign country, in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. The campaign had precluded any honest and credible investigation to substantiate such allegations. The objective was to exert pressure on States to accept the version of events peddled by the United States and the United Kingdom. That had been demonstrated by the events in Khan Shaykhun the previous year, when the United States and its allies had stirred up a media campaign and had launched a military attack on a military base in Syria before an honest and objective investigation could be conducted. The same thing was happening once more. The United States had spread lies about the alleged use of chemical weapons in Douma and had launched an attack on Syrian territory in cooperation with its partners. That had occurred one day prior to the arrival of a fact-finding mission from the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which had been invited by his country to carry out an objective and impartial investigation of the events.

163. He questioned why the three countries that had launched that attack had done so before they knew the results of the investigation, and wished to know the legal basis on which those countries could make such allegations without taking into account the Charter of the United Nations, international law and relevant treaties, particularly as they repeatedly highlighted their respect for their international commitments. He questioned the ethical and legal bases that allowed those countries to make such allegations without respecting the provisions of the relevant treaties and international law.

164. On the subject of maintaining the non-proliferation regime, he said that the United States and the United Kingdom had violated the 1995 resolution and, accordingly, their legal commitments. They had also prevented the 2015 Review Conference from adopting a final document in order to protect Israel. During the current session, many States had repeated that the main threat to peace and stability in the Middle East was the fact that Israel was the only country in the region that possessed arsenals of weapons of mass destruction and refused to accede to all relevant treaties. Israel also refused the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. All delegations knew that it was the refusal by that country to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty that was preventing its universalization. In addition, the country's refusal to place its facilities under a comprehensive safeguards agreement threatened the non-proliferation regime at the international level.

165. **Mr. Yermakov** (Russian Federation) said that his country had believed that it was surrounded by reasonable and understanding partners with whom it could hold a normal and mutually respectful discussion, and had always held both United Kingdom and United States diplomats in high esteem, but was sometimes dismayed at what was said by those delegations at international forums.

166. The Russian Federation was incredulous about the allegations that it had been involved in the chemical attack in Salisbury. Rather, it was more likely to be the work of the intelligence agencies of the United Kingdom itself. Meanwhile, the United States and the United Kingdom were using their leverage to silence their NATO partners and force them to display solidarity. However, that could not continue indefinitely.

167. The United Kingdom had failed to provide any data or proof regarding the attack in Salisbury. Any reasonable person would understand that the Russian Federation would have no reason to attack two of its own citizens on British soil. The Russian Federation felt shame on the behalf of the administration and diplomats of the United Kingdom, and of the representatives of the allies of the United Kingdom and the United States when they parroted such absurdities. As had been the case with regard to weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, the truth would eventually be revealed.

168. Regarding the absurd accusations against the Syrian Arab Republic, it would be possible for members of the Russian military who were at the site of the attack to verify the events that had occurred. However, the States that had carried out the missile attacks on the Syrian Arab Republic were unwilling for the truth to be revealed.

169. **Mr. Wood** (United States of America) said that the repeated dishonest claims made by the Syrian Arab Republic about its innocence regarding the use of chemical weapons was shameful. He reiterated that the United States would not cease its condemnation of the country's actions in all relevant forums until there was accountability. He also expressed astonishment at the lengths the Russian Federation would go to in order to defend the crimes committed by the regime in Damascus.

170. **Mr. Rowland** (United Kingdom) said that he would not be drawn into the rhetoric used by the representative of the Russian Federation. He had made his position very clear and the Russian Federation should take heed of the message conveyed by so many States.

171. Up to 75 people, including children, had been killed in a despicable and barbaric attack in Douma on 7 April 2018. The World Health Organization had reported that 500 patients seen by its partners in the country had had symptoms consistent with chemical weapons exposure, and that had been borne out by first-hand accounts of non-governmental organizations and aid workers. As stated by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom on 14 April, it was clear who was responsible for the atrocity. A significant body of information, including intelligence, indicated that the Syrian regime was responsible for the attack. Open source accounts alleged that a barrel bomb had been used to deliver the chemicals, and a regime helicopter had been seen above Douma on the evening of the attack. The opposition did not operate helicopters or use barrel bombs. Reliable intelligence indicated that Syrian military officials had coordinated what appeared to be the use of chlorine gas. No other group could have carried out the attack.

172. **Mr. Al Ashkar** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the accusations by the United States were not credible as they were based on unilateral conclusions, rather than impartial investigations or evidence. Furthermore, bearing in mind that the United States had never been held to account for its nuclear attacks on Japan, which had killed hundreds of thousands of people, and for its chemical attacks in Viet Nam, it was in no position to call for the Syrian Arab Republic to be held to account.

173. With regard to the reference by the representative of the United Kingdom to the report by the World Health Organization, the Director General of that Organization had stated that it had not been possible to verify the allegations contained in that report. Furthermore, with

regard to the statement made by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, he pointed out the hypocrisy of such a statement by a State that had considered the use of nuclear weapons in response to the attack in Douma.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.